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SUBJECT: U.S. TROOP DRAWDOWN IN AFGHANISTAN NOT A SURPRISE
TO GOF

REF: SECSTATE 227560

On December 20 poloff delivered reftel demarche to MFA Afghanistan Desk Officer Cyril Gerardon. In a follow up conversation with Gerardon on December 22, Gerardon explained that France had anticipated a U.S. adjustment to troop strength in response to the expanded presence of NATO ISAF troops. He commented that the growing presence of NATO forces was a better justification for the troop reduction than the growing capability of Afghan forces, adding that the Afghan army presence in the provinces was still minimal. He also said that it was a good idea for U.S. troops to remain ready to deploy, as growing instability in Afghanistan was always a possibility.

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Stapleton